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AUTHOR Hanson, Susan A.
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ABSTRACT

A project was conducted to build an education and career enhancement system for Pennsylvania's adult population over age 24 that includes all three basic components of a school-to-work program: work-based learning, school-based learning, and connecting activities. The program was opened to unemployed and underemployed adults in two rural Pennsylvania counties. Computer-assisted instruction was an integral part of the curriculum, and portfolios were used to hold students' relevant papers for reference during their future job searches. The program's classroom component was divided into two 8-week phases: career exploration and job search. The work-based component featured planned job training and work experiences, workplace mentoring, and opportunities to learn aspects of various local businesses. Connecting activities included the following: sharing the program's curricula and goals with local business/industry/labor and human resource agencies; linking students to available support services; and matching students with appropriate work-based learning opportunities. Of the 19 adults who enrolled in the program, 16 (84%) completed it. At the program's start, only four students were employed. At the program's end, 13 students were employed, 1 was definitely enrolling in postsecondary education, and 2 were seriously considering doing so. (MN)

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PROJECT # 98-7013

FINAL REPORT

Project Name: Preparing to Enter the Workforce: A School-to-Work Model for Adults

Project Year: 1996 - 1997

Submitted by:

Susan A. Hanson, Adult Programs Coordinator
ARIN Intermediate Unit 28
P. O. Box 175, Route 422 East
Shelocta, PA 15774
Phone: 412/463-5300

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ABSTRACT PAGE **Project No: 98-7013**

(You may adjust space between headings, but please limit the abstract to 2 pages.)

Grant Recipient: ARIN Intermediate Unit 28
Route 422 East, P.O. Box 175
Shelocta, PA 15774-0175
412-463-5300

Program Name: Preparing to Enter the Workforce: School-to-Work Model for Adults

Grant Allocation: $22,000

Project Period: July 1, 1996 - June 30 1997

Project Director: Susan Hanson

Project Purpose: To prepare unemployed or underemployed adults to enter the workforce.

Project Outcomes: 15 unemployed or underemployed adults will receive career counseling, vocational exploration, and employment related skills which will enable them to successfully enter the workforce.

Impact: These individuals will no longer be relying upon the public assistance system to support their lifestyle.

Product or Training Developed: A manual has been developed and is available through ABLE, AdvancE, and the WPALRC for distribution.

Products Available From: A manual has been developed and is available through ABLE, AdvancE, and the WPALRC for distribution.

Project Continuation and/or Future Implications: Project will be continued through the 1997-98 program year.

Conclusions/Recommendations: It is recommended that all programs interested in conducting a school to work project for adults review the materials included in the final project report for applicability and implement the suggestions contained in the narrative. We would caution projects intending to implement this type of project to carefully screen individual applicants as to their literacy levels and commitment to completing the project.

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAIN BODY OF THE FINAL REPORT

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to develop an adult education and career enhancement program that embraces the National Goals of Quality Education and contains all the elements of a School-to-Work model. This project was developed in response to impending Welfare Reform legislation which would require Public Assistance recipients to participate in employment skill development and job search in order to become self-supporting. In addition, many students enrolled in ARIN's Adult Education GED, ABE, ESL and Literacy Programs had expressed interest in having the curriculum structured to prepare them for the world of work. Many of our students did not possess rudimentary job search skills and had not developed realistic career goals.

TIME FRAME

- Identification of staff members - July 1996 through September 1996
- Staff orientation - September 1997
- Construction of marketing plan - July 1996 through November 1996
- Implementation of marketing plan - December 1996 through January 1997
- Curriculum development ongoing - September 1996 through April 1997
- Research and evaluation of classroom and work site materials - July 1996 through January 1997
- Order materials and supplies - December 1996 through February 1997
- Recruit and select students - November 1996 through February 1997
- Student orientation - January 1997 through February 1997
- Classroom-based component began February 10, 1997
- Assessment and Career Exploration - February 1997 through March 1997
- Employment skills instruction - March 1997 through May 1997
- Staff review of School-to-Work NovaNET computer program - July 1996 through March 1997
- Contact local businesses to recruit mentorship and employment sites - January 1997 through April 1997
- Work-base component began - March 31, 1997
- Career and employment counseling component - February 1997 through May 197
- Individual Career, Employment, Academic and Personal goal setting - February through March 1997
- Post assessment of all students - May 1997

- Program and student evaluation activities - February 1997 through May 1997
- Placement into employment or mentorships - March 1997 through May 1997
- Exploration of post secondary education options - February 1997 through June 1997
- Follow-up activities - May 1997 through June 1997

ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM

ARIN Intermediate Unit #28 is governed by a board of directors composed of elected representatives of the eleven (11) school districts in Armstrong and Indiana Counties and headed by an Executive Director. This governing body approves and monitors all programs, staff, and activities.

ARIN Intermediate Unit is one of the principle stakeholders in the STW Opportunities System Implementation Grant which Indiana County has received, and was the lead agency in applying for a STW OS Planning Grant in Armstrong County. The Armstrong County Grant was awarded to ARIN. ARIN has provided ABLE funded Adult Basic Education, GED preparat Literacy, English-as-a Second Language and Homeless Education to adults in need of these services for the past eighteen (18) years.

PROJECT STAFF

ARIN Intermediate Unit's, Coordinator of Adult Education, Susan Hanson supervised all aspects of the program and served as the Project Coordinator. The Coordinator possesses a Master's Degree in Exceptionalities, extensive course work in the area of Adult Education and twenty-two (22) years experience in the field of education. Ms. Hanson holds PA Certification in the areas of Special Education, Cooperative Education, Secondary School Guidance and Supervision.

The instructor for the program was Sondra Wiggins who possesses a B.S. Degree in Education with an Instructional II teaching certificate. Ms. Wiggins has nine(9) years experience

in public school education and twelve(12) years experience as an adult education instructor.

The counselor for the program was Betty Selkirk who possesses a B.S. Degree in Education with an Instructional I teaching certificate. Ms. Selkirk has fifteen (15) years experience with the public school system and twenty (20) years experience as a teacher/counselor in adult basic education and training programs.

The Work Site Coordinator for the program was Linda Cook who possesses a B.S. Degree in Education and a Master's Degree as a Reading Specialist. She has four (4) years experience in public school education and six (6) years experience as an Adult Education instructor.

Chris Clevenger, an Indiana University of Pennsylvania student working on her Master's Degree in Adult Education, served her internship in the School-To-Work Program. Ms. Clevenger possesses a B.S. Degree in Education with an Instructional I teaching certificate.

Sherree Ashbaugh and Colleen Zitzelman, ARIN Adult Program's support staff provided secretarial support for the program.

Volunteer readers who had undergone ARIN Tutor Training, Nancy, Ralph, Chris, and Melanie, provided educational support for various students enrolled in the School-to-Work Program.

AUDIENCE

This report will be a resource guide for Adult Education programs interested in starting a School-To -Work program for Adults. This project will also be useful to Adult Education Programs who desire to assist students in the job search process, and career exploration.

DISSEMINATION OF PROJECT:

The Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) Bureau of the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be the source of dissemination of the project. Project products and final reports

can be requested from:

ABLE
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

AdvancE
Pennsylvanian Department of Education
PDE Resource Center, 11th Floor
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

Western Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Resource Center
5347 William Flynn Highway, Route 8
Gibsonia, Pennsylvania 15044-9644

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This School-to-Work Special Demonstration project was designed to provide assistance to adult individuals, over the age of 24, who were unemployed and/or under employed and who were actively seeking permanent employment or post-secondary education. These adults were part of a population, not covered under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. Individuals included in this population had academic literacy skills and career specific skills that were below the standards necessary for entry level jobs and/or post secondary education preparation.. In order to achieve the goals contained in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act, most of the national efforts have been directed at the secondary high school level with programs such as Youth Apprenticeship and Tech Prep. However, according to the US Census Bureau, by the year 2000, the average age of workers in the USA can be expected to increase to 36 to 39 years. In order to keep productivity growing, therefore, the adult workforce must be strengthened by incorporating career education and preparation. along with academic literacy skill education.

In the statistics relative to both of the counties that ARIN services, a correlation is shown between poverty, rural life, and school dropout rates. This is substantiated the Pennsylvania

County Planning Data kit: 1992 supplement. Job Service statistics in both Armstrong and Indiana Counties have ranked near the bottom of the state's unemployment roles over the past ten years. Double digit unemployment existed in five of the past ten years in Indiana County, including 1992 to 1994; Armstrong County showed a 8.9% unemployment rate in 1995. Along with high unemployment rates, the demand for public assistance benefits is critical. Armstrong and Indiana Counties poverty rates are substantially higher than those reported as an average in PA. .The median family income for PA is $34,856; while Armstrong's is $27, 024 and Indiana's is $22,966. Both counties are predominantly rural populations; Indiana is 79.1% rural while Armstrong is 85% rural. Both counties have over 15,000 people with less than a ninth grade education. This accounts for 22% of the adult population in Indiana County and 28% in Armstrong County. These statistics are supported in the 1990 US Census Data

Armstrong and Indiana Counties have been ranked at the bottom of the state unemployment roles for years. According to Robert Lankard, Job Center ESP manager, "Since 1985, there has been wholesale dislocation in the coal mining, manufacturing, natural gas, and electricity generation industries. The skills possessed by these workers are not readily transferable in the remaining economy.

Vocational researchers, Edling and Sosbe (1991), point out, however, that "the solution for these adult workers and their potential employers is not another "quick fix" that emphasizes cheap, easily attainable skills in a narrow field. Such skills will become obsolete as quickly as the new equipment the workers use. Instead , the solution for these adults lies in re-laying their academic foundation and then building new technical skills on to the new and more solid base."

In Pennsylvania, Workplace Literacy programs have for years combined school-based and work-based learning. Workforce programs, such as Customized Job Training and Apprenticeship Programs have increased adult workers' technical skills. On a national level, a number of adult

"Bridge" programs, based on the Tech Prep model have sprung into existence since 1990. A review of the literature did not identify any Adult education models that contained all three basic components of a school-to-work program: work-based learning, school-based learning and connecting activities.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WITH WHICH TO EXPLORE PROBLEM

The inclusive goal of this project was to build a school-to-work system for the adult population over age 24 that included all three basic components of a School-to-Work program. Specifically, the program will develop and implement curricula that will increase the academic literacy skills and skills related to chosen career clusters of unemployed and under-employed adults to the level necessary for entry level jobs in selected occupations and/or post secondary education. This will be accomplished through a process that will involve cooperation and commitment from project staff, business/industry/labor, and community based agencies.

It was ARIN Intermediate Unit's goal to build upon promising adult education activities which exist in the local communities and the STW continuum outlined in the Local Compacts implementation / planning grants to develop and operate a program which will prepare out of school adults to enter or re-enter the workforce, or develop the skills needed to be successful in post secondary training.

OBJECTIVE 1:

To develop and implement a school-based learning experience that provided a program of study that was based on high academic and career skill standards in preparation for employment and/or post secondary education or training.

A. Career exploration to discover students interests, abilities and aptitudes.
B. Career and educational counseling.
C. Introduction to the twelve (12) career clusters set forth by US Department of Labor and Industry.

D. Instruction in job search techniques
E. Provide computer assisted instruction in four (4)career clusters
    a. Health
    b. Business
    c. Trades and Technology
    d. Public Service
F. Develop academic and technical curricula with integrated work related instructional materials validated by business/industry/labor.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To develop and implement a work-based learning experience that provides a planned program of job training or experiences:

A. Matching students' interests and abilities with appropriate work-based opportunities.
B. Identify at least fifteen (15) work-based learning sites
C. Identify and train at least fifteen (15) work site mentors
D. Develop work experience in selected career field
E. Workplace mentoring
F. Instruction in "all aspects of the industry"

OBJECTIVE 3:

To provide connecting activities to coordinate involvement of employers, schools and students:

A. In service orientation and training for teachers, mentors, and counselors.
B. A strong counseling component
   a. Linking students to support services,
   b. Providing academic and work related guidance,
   c. Providing assistance in goal setting,
   d Transition services into employment and/or post secondary education/training.
C. Construct and implement a marketing plan that will garner community-wide support and enthusiasm for the School-to-Work program.

OBJECTIVE 4:

a. To provide an adult education class for fifteen(15) unemployed/under-employed out of school adults who were able to participate in a rigorous training program meeting the following criteria:
Over the age of twenty-four (24).
b. Enter the program functioning on at least a 9.0 grade level in math and language skills as shown on a Work Related Foundation Skills General TABE test.
c. Willingness to utilize trained Literacy Tutors when in need of one-on-one instruction.
d. Possess the motivation and ability to make a four month commitment of program attendance.
e. Provide their own transportation and child care services.
f. Possess a high school or GED diploma

OBJECTIVE 5

To develop administrative, instructional, and support strategies that will enable all students to meet individual and program goals.

a. At least seventy-five percent (75%) of students enrolled in the program will complete.
b. Ninety-five percent (95%) of completers will have increased two (2) grade levels in math , reading, and language as demonstrated by pre-and post-testing with the TABE Work Related Foundation Skills Test.
c. At least ninety percent (90%) of completers will enter full time, unsubsidized employment and/or post-secondary education within ninety (90) days of program completion.

PROCEDURES USED TO STUDY, EXPLORE PROBLEM

GENERAL DESIGN.

The design of this program was particularly appropriate for achieving the state priority A-9, in that it addresses the School-to-Work system's common features and components: (1) the integration of work-based and school-based learning, (2) the linking of occupational and school-based learning; and (3) the linking of secondary and post secondary education. It also establishes linkages among the school, other human service providers, and industries in the community so that work-based and school-based learning are incorporated.

This project is consistent with the Philosophy of Education contained in Chapter IV of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Adult Education State Plan, in that it speaks to the need "...to encourage unions, businesses, and industries to develop Worksite adult education programs." It is in keeping with the goals and objectives of the state plan, especially the following.

- Objective 2.1 - Expand workforce literacy education in both rural and urban Pennsylvania.
- Objective 2.3 - Collaborate at state and local levels to meet the educational , employment, social and personal needs of adult learners.
- Objective 3.3 - Encourage alternative delivery systems for adult education programs.

RESEARCH METHODS

The Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), Waco, Texas, has done the most extensive research in the area of adult "Bridge" programs. This project utilized curriculum outlines and resource references from CORD that served as a basis for individualizing competencies, describing curricula and for selecting materials.

In the book, Tech Prep Associate Degree , written and compiled by Hull and Parnell (1991), the following methods were cited as being particularly successful in training or retraining adults for technology: hands-on learning, applications orientation (immediate tactical, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic reinforcement), cooperative learning, encouragement of cooperation

rather than cooperation, allowances for different learning styles and rates; and consideration of the personal issues affecting adult students. These methods served as topics for staff development.

This project accessed past 353 projects and materials available at AdvancE and through PDE Regional Staff Development Centers for some of the above areas, as well as for materials on job and employability skills.

STAFF ORIENTATION/TRAINING

The program staff first met in September 1996 to become acquainted with the goals of the project and to begin planning the structure of the program. Subsequent meetings dealt with student recruitment and interaction with local human service agencies. The instructor, counselor, and work site developer attended the PDE Region I staff development workshop presented by Marshall Karp. The December 1996 workshop dealt with Career Planning and Job Target Focusing and the February 1997 workshop dealt with Job Search. The program staff also attended the PAACE Midwinter Conference in February 1997 where several sessions were on program related topics.

STAFF PLANNING

During October, November, January of the project year plans were made for the recruitment of students, student orientation sessions, registration for staff development training, and course curricula. The program format included large group instruction, small group instruction, individualized instruction, counseling, computer assisted instruction, speakers from human service agencies, field trips, outside assignments, and research.

RECRUITMENT

In November, ARIN began advising potential students and human resource agency

providers by word of mouth through our regular interactions with them of our up coming program. In December, an informational letter and fact sheet was circulated throughout both Armstrong and Indiana Counties' human service agencies announcing the Adult To Work program's specific details on dates, times, location, procedure for registration, etc. At the beginning of January, it as necessary to send out a letter with a revised fact sheet with a later starting date. This change was necessary due to the fact that the ARIN staff was planning to attend the PAACE Midwinter Conference, which fell during the first week of scheduled. classes.

The best recruitment sources were the local Housing Authorities, Job Centers Department of Public Assistance, New Choices, and Human Service Department's Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

PROGRAM ORIENTATION

Two Fridays in January of 1997 were scheduled where interested individuals could come to hear about the program and its requirements and receive a copy of the contract.. The students had an opportunity to ask questions, tour the class site, complete the NovaNET "Introduction To Computer" lessons, and fill out a data sheet. Everyone who came had an individual interview with members of the staff. Anyone who was ready to make the commitment to the class signed their contract and registered for class that day.

An attempt was made to accommodate the personal needs of all interested clients. A special orientation session was set for Friday morning, January 31, 1997 to accommodate a client who couldn't attend the afternoon sessions. In addition, an alternate orientation session was held on Tuesday, February 4 for those unable to attend the Friday sessions. One student finished her orientation during break time while she was attending ARIN classes at the TRI-County Learning Lab.

Twenty-eight (28) were scheduled for orientation. Six (6) who attended orientation did

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not register due to car, transportation, and child care complications. Two (2) students entered class without attending the orientation, one on the first day of class and one on the third day. At the end of the first week of classes nineteen (19) students had made a commitment to complete the program.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The curricula included a variety of materials from several companies; however, the majority of our materials came from the JIST Company. A list of all resources, texts is given in Appendix I. Handouts are included in the Final Product which has been submitted with this document. The staff previewed many career videos, but did not include any in this session due to time constraints, the fact that many were out dated and inappropriate for adults.

During the Career Exploration phase of thê program, the staff used a variety of inventories and testing instruments to help the students assess their vocational interests, job related skills, educational skills, learning strengths, transferable skills, self-management skills, vocational values and barriers to employment. During the Job Search phase of the program, the staff used many occupational research books purchased for this program. The most helpful ones were The Occupational Outlook Handbook, The Dictionary of Occupational Titles, and The Enhanced Guide For Occupational Exploration. Four main texts were used throughout the program: Getting the Job You Really Want, Job Smarts I and II, Communicating Your Skills.

Computer assisted instruction was an integral part of the curricula.. During July and August of 1996, the instructor and project coordinator had researched and previewed the STW computer curriculum created by the NovaNET Company based out of the University of Illinois. As one part of the class schedule, the students followed the lesson format in their chosen career cluster trying to complete all of Level I, Technological Foundations, Levels II and III, Employability / Workplace Skills and Level II, Technology lessons in their career cluster. As part

of these lessons, students were exposed to and had opportunities to practice using the Internet to explore careers in the Occupational Outlook Handbook on-line. In addition, the staff and students used the computer software, CareerNet, from Pennsylvania's Occupational Outlook Handbook, to explore careers. The students also had the opportunity to gain experience using a word processor, WordPerfect 6.0, DOS version when they typed their own reports, resumes, and cover letters.

PORTFOLIOS/RECORDS

To maintain student data: personal and family information, employment history, educational background/ training, program educational and vocational assessment and inventories, the staff maintained program master files and student portfolios on each individual that entered the program after the orientation process. Our program information was recorded on JIST's Individual Service Strategy Portfolio and the student's assessment results were filed in here. Each student was given a Career Planner's Portfolio, a three pocketed school-to-work assessment tool from Curriculum Associates. These portfolios were divided into three vocational pockets: Discovering Yourself, Getting The Most Out of Your Education, and Obtaining Your Career Choice. These portfolios were used to hold and help organize the student's relevant papers. This resource was kept in the classroom during three-fourths of the program while the students were compiling their personal data and research. The portfolio was returned to the students for them to keep during the intensive job search part of the program so that they would have this data available for reference in their future job searches. Students were issued pocket folders for their daily papers, work sheets and personal materials.

SCHOOL-BASED COMPONENT

The school-based component of this program took place at the Tri-County Private Industry Council's Learning Lab site located in Homer City, PA. This program was not designed to be

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open entry / open exit. The classroom component was divided into two eight week phases: Career Exploration and Job Search. During the Career Exploration phase, classes were held Monday through Thursday, February 10, through March 27, 1997. Participants attended from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM each day for a total of twelve (12)hours per week. During the Job Search phase, classes were held Monday and Wednesday, March 31 through May 29, 1997. Participants attended 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM each day for a total of six (6) hours per week.

CAREER EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

During the Career Exploration phase, students received intensive opportunities to discover their career interests and academic abilities and to collect their personal job related data . The staff used the following inventories purchased from the JIST Company: Career Exploration Inventory, Barriers to Employment Success Inventory, Employability Checklist - located inside the Individual Service Strategy Portfolio. (The staff used JIST's Job Search Attitude Inventory in Phase two of the Program; however, based on experience it is recommended this should be used in the beginning of the program and possibly regiven at the end of the program to show the changes that have taken place throughout the course.)

The staff also used instructor resources accumulated from workshops and research such as Holland's Interest Inventory, Job Satisfaction Factors, What's Important to Me?, Personal Values, Values Questionnaire, Personality Profile, Discovering Yourself activities, Self Management Skill List. All of these instruments are included in the Final Product at the end of this report.

To enhance the student's awareness of available local resources, three speakers were invited to share pertinent information related to the job search process. The second night of class, Lorraine Petitto, a speaker from Penn State's Educational Opportunities Center which is funded by the US Department of Education and sponsored by Penn State University was invited. Ms. Pettito spoke on educational opportunities and administered the Survey Booklet of Level 2 of

Career Decision Making (CDM) System. The next speaker was Alan Hanson, Indiana County's Case Manager for Tri-County's Private Industry Council. He explained how his agency helped clients prepare for employment or training and offered to meet with anyone interested in exploring additional training or educational opportunities. Tom Dembosky from Indiana County's Job Center was invited to speak. Mr. Dembosky showed a video which explained the services available at the Job Center. He then discussed how to access these services. Mr.Dembosky also brought along a variety of resources for each student and forms so the students could register for employment through their county's Job Center. These speakers were very informative, friendly, and cooperative. As a result, the students felt more comfortable with the job search process, explored the services they had heard about, and made appointments to follow up where appropriate for their individual needs .

Near the end of this phase of the program, the students and staff took a field trip to Indiana County's Job Center. Students had the opportunity to register for employment and receive a brief interview. Mr. Dembosky guided them through the services of the office. The class was split into three groups of approximately six (6) students each and went in to the Job Center over three nights of class. As a result, the center gave priority to ARIN students and earmarked their employment interests to job opportunities that became available; several students received good job leads that led to interviews.

JOB SEARCH PHASE

During this phase the staff concentrated on teaching and executing job search techniques. The staff discussed traditional job search methods and introduced students to the most effective methods. All students prepared JIST cards, a chronological resume, and a cover letter. Interview techniques were taught and opportunities were given to practice their interviewing skills. Many also did a skills resume and additional cover letters. Students had also begun to go on scheduled

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job interviews and enter into employment. Communication skills and on-the-job skills were discussed in depth as well as developing behaviors and attitudes that would enable them to keep and maintain their jobs. Due to their job schedules, some students had to reluctantly drop out of the class activities.

As a class project, staff and students attended Indiana County PROUD, Gateways To Industry and Education, on April 25 or 26 at the Indiana County Area Vocational Technical School. It's mission was to promote regional industry, display state-of-the art technology, and inform the community about appropriate training and career options available in Indiana County. This activity was sponsored by local businesses and industries, human resource agencies, school districts, colleges, trade schools, and training centers. Students had the opportunity to explore and gather information on a variety of career fields. Students wrote a report on the highlights of the activity and also shared their information during class time.

Near the end of this part of class, students who had tested academically below a 10.9 grade level on their entry assessment of the General test of the TABE Work Related Foundation Skills were re-tested in their chosen occupational fields: Business, Health, Trades, or General. To assist in their on-the-job activities, the staff administered the TABE Work Related Problem Solving exercises. (We recommend using this activity earlier in the program; we feel it could be even more effective then.) It is good tool for assessing problem solving activities on the job.

The last night of the program a Banquet was held for all students and guests, program staff, supportive businesses and industries, worksite mentors. The students planned the menu and agenda and prepared the program booklet. All the staff and students provided the food for the dinner which was held at ARIN Intermediate's Central Office in Shelocta, PA. Local businesses and individuals from both Armstrong and Indiana Counties donated decorations, door prizes and food. Certificates of attendance were given to all students. The speaker of the evening was

Marshall Karp from Career Options of Dover, Ohio. He shared job search methods and answered questions from the audience. He encouraged and challenged our students in their pursuits of employment

WORK-BASED COMPONENT

This component provided a planned program of job training or work experiences, workplace mentoring, and an opportunity to learn the aspects of various local businesses. Work-based learning took place at regional business/industries who were supportive of our program. This was accomplished through a process that involved cooperation and commitment from project staff, local business/industry/labor, and community based agencies. The Work Site Coordinator worked closely with the Project Coordinator, County Job Center staff, area School-to-Work personnel, and the local Human Resource Council to identify businesses that served as mentorship and paid employment sites.

Beginning on April 7,1997 students who had been matched with mentors moved out into the identified work sites for a possible eight (8) weeks of 20 hour per week under supervision of the Work Site Coordinator. Students work schedules were developed based on the needs of mentoring businesses; some worked more than 20 hours per week. As mentioned before; for some students, this was a paid experience; for others, it was a volunteer experience. These students also continued their classroom training on employment related topics. Career exploration and skill refinement was ongoing. The business and occupational activities were related to the students' targeted career clusters. During these experiences with their mentors, students technical skills and job attitudes and behaviors increased. All had a positive experience; several were offered permanent positions upon completion of the program.

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CONNECTING ACTIVITIES

Connecting activities included sharing the program's curricula and goals with local business/industry/labor and human resource agencies. Students were linked to support services , received academic and work related guidance, and assisted with goal setting and transition into employment and/or post secondary education. Students were matched with appropriate work-based learning opportunities. In-service training was provided for the teacher, counselor, and work site coordinator locally and through PDE sponsored workshops and conferences. In April and May of 1997, activities included post assessment, summative evaluations, and placement activities. In June, follow up of students and reporting activities took place. ARIN plans to do follow-up activities for a period of two years to determine the effectiveness of this project for those who entered employment and post-secondary/associate degree programs.

REPORT ON GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

ARIN successfully conducted and completed a School-to-Work Program that included all three basic components of the school to work system for nineteen (19) students in the 1996-1997 program year. The students were prepared to enter or re-enter the workforce and developed skills needed to be successful in post secondary training. This was accomplished through a process that involved cooperation and commitment from project staff, business/industry/labor, and community based agencies.

OBJECTIVE 1.

All components of OBJECTIVE 1 were positively met through the school based component of the program as detailed above under the PROCEDURES USED TO STUDY AND EXPLORE THE PROBLEM. The students participated in extensive career exploration activities and up-to-date job search techniques, receiving career and educational guidance on a daily basis.

With the assistance of our adult education master's intern, most class nights, the program was able to provide three staff members for individual student interaction. Each class session consisted of large group activities, computer time, and small group/individual activities.

Each student was made aware of many new or previously undiscovered interests and abilities which each one possessed. The students were excited about the connection between the skills, interests, and abilities they possessed and a variety of realistic jobs that would suit them. The students were introduced to the career clusters set forth by the U.S. Department of Labor and Industry through their computer activities, resource books, career inventories, and general class discussions.

Many of the students did not have prior computer and/or typing skills when they entered the class. A highlight of the class was their exposure to the NovaNET computer system through the School To Work curricula which provided Internet career search opportunities along with introduction to electronic bulletin board activities. Many even learned basic typing skills, increasing their speed. throughout the program. They all learned to use WordPerfect 6.0 word processing software when they typed up their cover letters, resumes, and reports.

Through a continuation 353 grant the staff will be able to make better use of the NovaNET curriculum. During the 1996-97 project year all the students participated in all components. The staff discovered that not all parts of the program were applicable to adults. During the 1997-98 program year, the staff will select appropriate lessons for each student based on their career choices enabling them to cover more material during the program.

OBJECTIVE 2.

Of the nineteen (19) students originally enrolled, sixteen (16) were attending by the time the Job Placement component was reached. During the Career Exploration phase of the program,

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one (1) student had secured a job and two (2) students had stopped attending class. Within two weeks of the second phase, two (2) students had found permanent employment. That left a pool of fourteen (14) students to match with mentorships.

. The Work Site Coordinator and Project Coordinator strived to find work-based learning sites that matched the students' targeted career cluster. The Work Site Coordinator maintained regular contact with the work sites, acting as liaison between the mentor, employer, class and student. She presented the goals of this program to prospective work sites and tried to gain an understanding of the employers' needs. The goal had been to identify eight (8) work-based learning sites. We were able to match seven (7) of the fourteen (14) attending students with a mentorship work experience.

All the experiences were positive ones for the students involved. The employers were very supportive, understanding and well satisfied. Most employers had been reluctant to participate due to negative results of similar program that had been run with area youth through a high school based Work Experience Program All work sites were pleased with the hard work, appearance, manners, attitude, and cooperation of our adult students. Three (3) of the work sites offered permanent jobs to the participating students; two accepted and are currently working; the third student has enrolled in college.

One student was not accepted at the original work site contacted, but was successfully matched with another site. However, the original site was so impressed with our student that, within two weeks, they offered her a permanent position in one of their different work sites, which she accepted.

The mentorship experience helped one of the students realize that she would need to go back for further training in order to pursue her change of career goal. She had entered the program with a Bachelor's Degree, currently under employed and classified as a dislocated worker.

One student accepted a mentorship quite a distance from her home and was unable to continue it. This short experience helped her to realize that her interest in the secretarial field and plan to enter business school was not appropriate for her. As a result, she became very aggressiv in job hunting. Within two weeks, she had secured a permanent position that she thoroughly enjoyed.

One student began very successfully and was appreciated by the mentors. Due to personal problems, she stopped participating. The work-site was very supportive and understanding and had been willing to try and help her work through her problems if she had continued. They enjoyed participating in the School-to-Work program and would be willing to participate during the 1997-98 program year.

OBJECTIVE 3.

In-service orientation and training for the program staff was provided through in-house activities, regional workshops, and the state Midwinter conference. A group in-service and training for our work site mentors was not held as planned. This objective was met on an individual basis by our Work Site Coordinator and Project Coordinator. It was discovered that it was unrealistic due to the time frame to accomplish this goal as a large group. The need was better served by the individual interaction.

There was a strong counseling component in this program.. Students had daily access to the counselor and instructor and any other staff that was present. Students were provided academic guidance and transition services into employment and/or post secondary education and training. Students were assisted in their decision making processes of career choice, goal setting, and job search. Students were linked students to the support services of the local Human

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Resource agencies, businesses, labor, and industry.

The Project Coordinator and Work Site Coordinator developed and implemented a marketing plan to present the program to the community. They attended the Human Resource Council meetings and local School To Work activities. They contacted local businesses, labor, and industry to share our programs goals and facts in person, by phone, and by dissemination of program letters and flyers. First responses from community employers were reluctant and hesitant; area agencies were interested but wanted more details and information. As our program unfolded, support and enthusiasm grew from all who had contact with the program.

OBJECTIVE 4.

The program was designed for students who were under employed or unemployed and were able to make a serious commitment to participate in the whole four month program. Thirty people (30) responded when they became aware of the program. Orientation sessions were established to acquaint interested persons to the requirements of the class and discover who had the motivation and ability to participate in the rigorous training program. Twenty-three (23) attended an orientation session; of those who attended orientation, seventeen (17) actually enrolled. Six (6) clients were unable to make the commitment for the class due to: child care complications (3), reliable transportation (1),concerns over distance to class and time involved (1), and uncertainty whether program could actually help situation (1) Two others joined the program on the first and second day of class.

In the original plan it had been decided to limit the class enrollment to fifteen (15) high school graduates over age twenty-four who functioned on at least a ninth (9th) grade level in math and language skills as shown on a Work Related Foundation Skills General TABE test. It was decided to accept all interested adult applicants who were willing to make the commitment and

able to provide their own transportation and child care services. It had been anticipated there would be a similar drop out rate as with regular adult education classes. Also, since this was the first time for this program, it was decided to experiment with the wide variety of applicants' skills and abilities and ages.

The ages of the students ranged from twenty-two (22) to fifty six (56). The majority, ten (10), of the students were in the thirties (30) age bracket. Three (3) were in their twenties, four (4) were in their forties, and two (2) were in their fifties. There was no noticeable difference in student participation, involvement, or commitment because of age. The variety of ages with myriad life experiences contributed to an interesting class as each age group had different perspectives to share. The students formed a close bond regardless of age. They helped, supported, encouraged, challenged, and enjoyed each other. The frequency of the class sessions made this possible.

Of the original nineteen (19) students who enrolled and began the program, all attended regularly and faithfully through the first six (6) weeks of the Career Exploration phase of the program. Staff members were pleased and amazed by the level of commitment and perseverance that the students who began the program displayed. With two weeks left, three (3) students stopped attending. Two were absent due to a serious illness and personal family problems; neither ever returned to the program, but the staff had maintained contact with the sick student who found a job in June. One student secured a permanent job with good prospects for further advancement. Sixteen (16) began the Job Search phase. All but one finished the classes. As students found jobs, some could not keep the class commitment due to their work schedule. All maintained contact with the program except for the one who didn't complete the classes. The staff found that when students were interested and the class relevant to their needs, they were able to make and keep their original commitment for the duration of the program; this was higher than staff

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expectations and different from experiences with ARIN's other adult education classes.

The staff discovered that accepting all the interested committed applicants worked except in one case involving illiteracy. One student, a high school graduate was unable to read. The staff attempted to find a reader (from the pool of trained tutors or community volunteers) to work with him during class times, but it was difficult to locate an individual who was willing to also make the four month commitment. The staff was able to locate four individuals who were able to come in once or twice a week.. It was very demanding on the staff to divide their time between one student and the remaining eighteen students.

As the staff attempted to problem solve the one-to-one instruction required by this student a Graduate Inter was obtained who was working on her Master's Degree in Adult Education. She was referred to the School-to-Work Program by ARIN's Literacy Specialist. However, she was not interested in working all of the class time with just one student; she wanted to be able to experience as many aspects of adult education as possible. She was willing to work part of each evening she could come to read for our student.

The staff referred this student for a tutor and a match was made after several weeks. He started meeting with his tutor outside of class time and continued with his tutor until the middle of March when he found a job. He was also matched with a trained tutor who was able to come to class one night a week. However, it was very challenging for the staff to have a student who needed one-on-one assistance all the time.. He was not able to keep up on the computer lessons even with a reader. The level and pace of the program was beyond his academic abilities. He was able to participate in group discussions adequately and was a very likable, hard working individual. When he didn't have a reader, the staff allowed him to view videos from the CDL course or let him type on the computer. He enjoyed the class and kept contact with the instructors once he obtained full time employment.

It is not recommend having an illiterate person in this type of fast paced class. The situation was very challenging and demanding on the staff while slowing down the overall class progress. Providing activities and supervision for the illiterate student limited the staff's time and instruction spent with the other literate students.

There were three (3) students who were on a fifth grade reading level and four (4) others who functioned at the sixth (6th) to eighth (8th) grade reading level. They did not need tutors but did need extra instructional time and additional time to complete their assignments. It was challenging for all these students but they were able to cope with great effort and a lot of hard work. Out of these seven individuals, five found employment during the program year using skills they had learned through this class. To compensate for these students as the program progressed, instruction was provided in groups based on the students' reading levels. This was very effective for all concerned. Students were then able to progress at their own pace without being held back or rushed through the material being presented.

There were eleven (11) students functioning at the ninth (9th) to twelfth (12th) grade reading levels; one of these students entered with a Bachelors Degree as a dislocated worker. It was found reading levels were more important than the math or science ones as had been written into the original proposal. It is recommended that from the beginning of a program of this type that students should be grouped according to reading abilities. The staff then would be able to spend more quality time with each individual's needs. The staff could also provide different appropriate instructional activities with the groups that needed extra assistance with out slowing down the groups that were able to progress more quickly.

Six students entered the program needing their GED diploma. Four did pass the GED test requirements while attending the classes. Not having a GED did not limit the student's participation in this class. However, it is felt that anyone without a GED should also be required

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to enroll in a GED preparation class at the same time if possible. This is a priority. Not having a high school diploma definitely impacts a person's opportunities for employment.

The staff felt it would have been beneficial to have known the students academic levels before they entered the program. Students were not assessed until the beginning of the class. It is recommended the students be assessed using the TABE Work Related Foundation Skills General Test as part of the orientation/screening process. The staff also feels that the orientation process should be longer, more intensive, and individualized. At that time, individual recommendations for additional remediation and tutoring could be made before students were accepted into the class. Counseling referrals could be made concerning appropriate programs for the interested clients.

OBJECTIVE 5.

Of the nineteen (19) students who enrolled in the program, sixteen (16) finished the complete program representing eighty-four percent (84 %) of the group. One (1) of the three who dropped out stayed in the program until after she spent several weeks on her mentoring experience. One (1) of the other students who dropped out secured a job in June. There was only one student who the staff lost contact with.

When students were retested at the end of the program, three (3) did not need any re-testing since they had scored 12.0 and above on all individuals sub tests. Six (6) students were not present to retest due to employment, illness, and personal problems. The remaining students' testing data is listed as follows by individual sub-tests. One (1) student increased at least two (2) grade levels in Reading skills while three (3) additional ones did not need to retake this test. Four (4) increased two (2) grade levels in Math skills. Two (2) increased two (2) grade levels in Language skills while three (3) additional ones did not need to retake this test.

When the program began, four (4) of the original nineteen (19) students were employed. At the end of the program, thirteen (13) were employed and one (1) was definitely enrolling in a post-secondary institution. Two(2) of the employed students were seriously considering re-entering higher education in the fall. Two of the other students had interviews pending on possible job opportunities.

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS/TECHNIQUES USED AND RESULTS

To evaluate the program, feedback forms were given out several times throughout the program. In addition, a comprehensive written evaluation report was received from the students who finished the program. The students' names were not required on the response forms. The staff evaluated the curriculum and student progress weekly making changes regularly to meet the student and program needs and goals.

The individual and personal goals of the students were addressed and met throughout the program.

From the staff interaction with the students and frequent evaluation comments, the program received high marks and can be considered a successful program. Students were very satisfied with the program, even with the intensity and amount of work involved. Students constantly expressed their appreciation at being able to attend this class and recommended that it be repeated so their friends and family could also benefit from such an experience. A feedback form was developed and distributed to mentors and employers and again the responses were positive.

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PROCEDURE FOR DISSEMINATION

A Final Product which includes a copy of this report and associated appendixes and handout has been forwarded to PDE as well as computer diskette's which contain the report. Information on the out-comes of the 1996-97 School-to-work Project have been shared with employers, referral agencies, and local Chambers of Commerce.

Consumable Books Used:

Job Smarts # 1 - Curriculum Associates
Job Smarts # 2 - Curriculum Associates
Getting the Job You Really Want - JIST
Developing a Vocational Plan - Book #7 - Adkins Life Skills/Employability Skills Series
(This is an old series and we won't use again.)

Resource Books: JIST

Communication Your Skills
Very Quick Job Search (Text, Workbook, Instructor's Guide)
What Color Is Your Parachute?
Job Survey - How to be a Success at Work
America's Top Jobs
Technical & Trade
Office Management & Sales
Medical, Educational, & Human Services
America's 50 Fastest Growing Jobs
America's Federal Jobs
The Worker Traits Data Book
Americans with Disabilities Act
Occupational Outlook Handbook
America's Top 300 Jobs
The Enhanced Guide for Occupational Exploration
U.S. Industrial Outlook
Guide for Occupational Exploration
PA Occupational Outlook Handbook
Exploring Careers - A Young Person's Guide
Dictionary of Occupational Terms
The Skills Advantage
Why Should I Hire You?

Books from other Sources

The Overnight Resume - Ten Speed Press
The Job Hunting Handbook - Dahlstrom & Company

TABE Tests - forms 7 & 8

General; Business, Health, Trade/Technical
Work-Related Foundation Skills
Problem Solving

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